

# The Novel Experiences of Guy Garrick, Detective

By ARTHUR B. REEVE.

"GARRICK, the impossible has happened!" exclaimed Col. Van Loan, of the American-Enterprise Trust Company, as the young detective seated himself beside a big double mahogany desk.

Col. Van Loan swung around in his chair, his head forward.

"I have sent for you, Garrick, because, well, I have heard of your scientific work, and this is a case that requires something more than any detective agency I know is capable of."

He paused. Garrick said nothing. One word was ringing through his ears—"The impossible." What did it mean?

Col. Van Loan hitched his chair a bit closer to Garrick.

"The new vault of the American-Enterprise has been entered and robbed," he added in a low whisper.

If Van Loan had exploded a charge of nitroglycerin the effect could not have been more startling. With a mighty effort, Garrick stifled an exclamation of surprise and incredulity.

"Why, sir," resumed the magnate, "if that can happen, no one is secure—not even the government itself."

"How do you suppose it happened?" asked Garrick eagerly.

"None of us has any idea," replied Van Loan, rising and pacing the floor helplessly. "Of course, being a detective, you are acquainted, at least in a general way, with the safeguards that are thrown about valuables nowadays. Some one has broken them all down. We have found bags of lead substituted for bags of gold, packages of brown paper in the place of bank notes and worthless envelopes where negotiable securities ought to be. Some one has avoided the network of wires, has been able to defy the half dozen massive bolts on the ponderous doors of our vault, has penetrated the thick wall of steel and concrete—somehow—as if—well, as if he were a thief in the fourth dimension."

Garrick tried to reason it out. Here was a burglar-proof, fire-proof, bomb-proof, mob-proof, earthquake-proof vault with all the human, mechanical and electrical safeguards that modern science apparently could devise. Yet it had been entered.

"Has a trusted employee gone wrong?" he suggested tentatively.

"Impossible," asserted Van Loan emphatically. "No one single employee could get in there alone for an instant. We have the double custody system. It takes at least two to get in there."

"A conspiracy?" queried Garrick, still striving for time.

Van Loan shook his head. "I am one of the two," he replied quietly.

Just then the door opened. Van Loan turned and a woman entered, a young woman, demure, dainty, chic.

"You will excuse me—ah, Miss Gaylord," greeted Van Loan quickly. "I'm very busy just now. Can't you come in later—about noon?"

"Surely," she smiled, with a quick look at Garrick. "I beg your pardon."

"The little man in the barber shop downstairs," explained Van Loan, as she left. "I don't know how she got past my secretary, unless it is because the news has disorganized all of us—who know it." He added with a significant nod at Garrick that the thing was so good further until it was impossible to conceal it longer.

Van Loan had pressed a button under his desk and a boy answered.

"Ask Mr. Fordyce to come in a moment," he ordered, then added to Garrick: "The cashier. When I said we had the double-custody system, I didn't mean I was the one who had part of the combination of the outside doors. We have what we call also a 'custody trust' of large estates—a department for those who are too rich to want to bother with their actual securities. It is a sort of vault within a vault where those securities and other valuables are kept. The American-Enterprise handles everything for such customers. Fordyce and I have the combination for that inner vault. Fordyce and Kenton, his assistant, have the outside combination for the big door. But it is that inside vault that has been robbed—which makes it all the more impossible to understand. Mr. Fordyce, this is the young detective, Garrick, of whom I spoke to you when we made the discovery this morning."

Fordyce shook hands. He was a quiet-spoken man, one who showed that he had long been accustomed to handling other people's money; not a wealthy man himself, but of a good family that had been in banking of one form or another for many years.

"You can well imagine, Mr. Garrick," he said, "the consternation we felt when we opened the vault this morning to get some papers of the Longmore estate and found such a condition. Even yet we do not know the extent of the loss. It will take days to go over everything and check it up—to say nothing of finding out how it happened."

Garrick thought a minute.

"Let me see," he said finally. "How could we trace a robbery, supposing it possible, from the street to the securities, after nightfall?"

"We shall be glad to go over the ground with you," answered Van Loan, leading the way from the office, and talking as he went.

"First, there are the locked metal doors from the street. They close some time after eight, and no one of the tenants of the building can get by without being observed."

They had come to the flight of steps that led down to the vaults themselves.

"Next there is another iron door,"

pointed out Van Loan, "leading to the stairs. Then at the foot of the stairs is a heavy barred steel door and a mirror placed at an angle so that a night watchman here can see in either direction."

Garrick looked quickly about. There in the antechamber, in a rack, stood two shining guns ready for an emergency.

"And," added Van Loan, "at last we come to the main door of the vault itself."

He paused before the ponderous mechanism, which now was swung open for the day's business.

"H'm," mused Garrick—"four complicated locks to be picked, one of them a lock of latest pattern shielded by impregnable armor."

Suddenly an idea flashed across his mind, suggested by a case of which he had heard. He bent down and examined the time lock. No, it seemed to be in perfect order.

"What are you looking at?" inquired Fordyce quickly.

"I recall a case," he remarked, "where the time lock on a safe had been rendered inoperative and it was never discovered until after the robbery because no one ever tried to get in until the correct time. But this lock seems to be all right."

"To say nothing of other locks inside," put in Van Loan, "and a network of sensitive electric wires, the burglar alarms concealed in the walls and floors and the location of which is not generally known."

They had passed the door, the last line of defense. There opened up a veritable cave of Aladdin. Everywhere was money in every shape and form. It was as though a modern Midas had passed through and with his magic touch had transformed everything into money beyond the wildest dreams of avarice.

"And the vault itself—the walls!" queried Garrick, tapping them casually.

"The body of the vault," answered Fordyce quickly, "is built up of steel plates bound together by screws from the inside of the vault so that the screws cannot be reached from the outside. The plates themselves are of two classes, those of hard and those of softer steel, set alternately so as to be both shock and drill proof. The steel of high tensile strength is used to resist the effect of high explosives, while the other has great resisting power against drilling. It will wear smooth the best of drills, and only unlimited time would suffice to get through that way."

"Then there is a layer of twisted steel bars added to the plates, another network to break any drill that may have survived the attack on the steel plates. That also adds to the power of resisting explosives. In fact, the amount of explosive necessary and the shocks that it must produce simply put that method of getting in out of the question."

"Why," he went on, "where the outside plates come together to form the angles and corners massive angles of steel are welded over the joint. The result is a solid steel box, all embedded in a wall of rock concrete—impregnable—absolutely impregnable."

He paused.

"The door is the only possible chance. That is water tight, seven stepped, ground to the minutest fraction of an inch. The most expert yeggman who ever lived would have no chance at that—unless he were a lock expert endowed with omniscience. So you see why it is that we say that the impossible has happened."

Inside the huge vault were various other protections, tiers of safety deposit boxes with which an elaborate system of safety had been built up, safes for various purposes, and in the far corner a vault within a vault, the vault of the "custody trust department."

Van Loan opened it with Fordyce's aid, each knowing only part of the combination and neither being able to work it in such a way as to be seen by the other.

In this inner vault were rows and rows of fat packages tied with little bells of red tulle. Van Loan picked out one and opened it.

Instead of crinkly examples of engraving that represented a fortune there was nothing inside but common brown paper, as though it had been stuffed in merely to satisfy the casual glance that the envelope had not been tampered with.

He opened a small heavy money bag which he took from a little safe in one corner in which some wealthy people kept currency against time of panic when gold might be at a premium. Garrick looked in. Instead of bright gleaming gold pieces there was a mass of dull dross—lead!

"What do you make of it?" asked Fordyce helplessly.

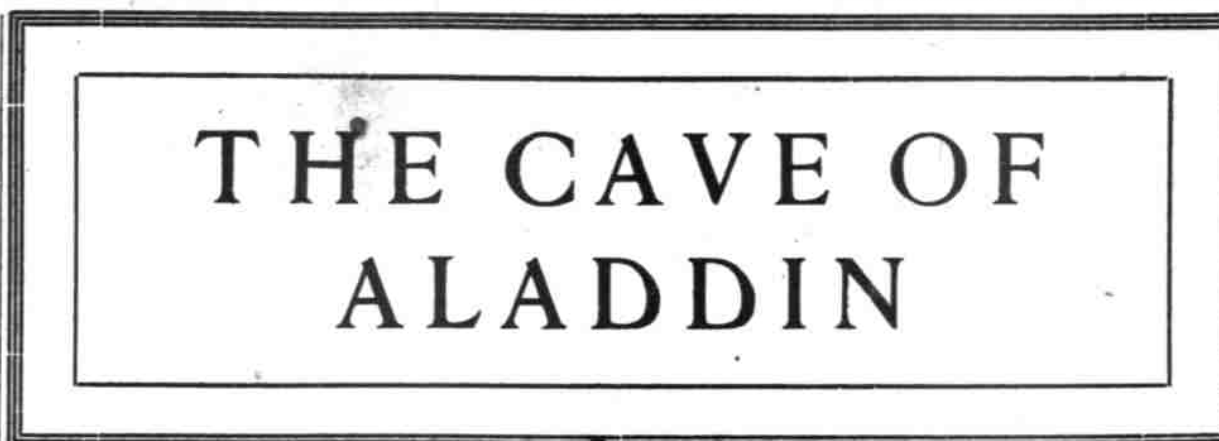
Garrick looked from him to Van Loan. Neither apparently even laid claim to having an explanation. He tried to reason it out himself. Only one idea occurred to him. Why had the robber been so careful to conceal on the surface his stealthiness? Perhaps he intended to come back. Surely the temptation of what remained still would be strong. A half-formed plan flitted through Garrick's mind, but with his natural caution he said nothing about it.

Instead he shook his head slowly. "I shall have to do some outside work before I can even attempt to answer that," he said simply.

As they turned to pass out, he noted a telephone on the wall, and paused before it.

"That, I suppose," he said, "is to communicate with the outside in case any one is shut up here."

"Yes."



There, in the smooth steel wall, yawned a black hole.

"Well, I am going up to my office," went on Garrick, "and then I shall want to come down here again. May I?"

"By all means," answered Van Loan quickly. "You—don't intend to stay in the vault?"

"Of course not," answered Garrick. "I gave you credit for better intelligence," smiled Van Loan. "You would be suffocated, you know."

"Oh, of course. But will you have the time lock on the outside door left inoperative?"

Van Loan thought a moment. "That's an unprecedented thing," he remarked finally, looking at Fordyce who said nothing.

"He has a large, broad nail, the nail of a good liver, a good spender, a man of good nature."

"You know Mr. Fordyce?"

"He comes in once in a while. He has an aristocratic nail."

"How about—er—Mr. Kenton, his assistant?"

She looked up quickly. "You know them all?" she asked.

"Oh, slightly," he answered. "They seldom come down here. I don't like to talk too much about my customers. You wouldn't appreciate my talking about you to them would you?"

Garrick smiled and changed the subject. "Garrick's office was a modest little suite in one of the new huge tower buildings with another relay and dry cells."

During the rest of the afternoon Garrick stuck pretty closely to his little improvised office, taking care, however, to get acquainted with such of the employees about the building as would be necessary in case he needed to get in at night. Outside he had stationed McCorkle and arranged to keep in touch with him.

Still, nothing happened during the day, and as closing time for the banking day approached, Garrick sought out Van Loan to find out exactly how he might keep in touch with him during the evening, as well as with Fordyce and Kenton.

"I may need you at any time," he said, "and when I do I shall want you all quickly."

"Where?" asked Van Loan.

"Down there in the custody vault I have placed what is known as a selenium cell and a relay, attached to the telephone wire and leading up here. Now that you are all here," he added, turning to Fordyce and Kenton, "let us open that vault. You see, now, why I left that time lock inoperative. Something is going on down there. Come on," he added, dashing down the stairs.

"Selenium?" puffed Van Loan, as he followed.

"Yes," called back Garrick. "Hurry! It is a peculiar element, a poor conductor of electricity in the darkness, a good one in the light. I reason if it is out this way, suppose some one should enter the vault. The first thing necessary would be to switch on the lights. That would act on the selenium cell, complete the circuit and then this bell would ring."

It seemed incredible. Down below, hidden by the impenetrable steel walls and doors, there was a light shining on the tiny selenium cell tucked away in the custody vault.

Some one was there!

One half expected to see the heavy steel door open, perhaps the night watchman killed.

But no. The door was closed, just as Fordyce and Kenton had left it, the night watchman sitting there vigilantly on duty, more surprised than they at seeing Van Loan and the rest at that time of night.

One after another, the heavy bolts were shot back as Fordyce and Kenton worked the combination.

Inside the big vault all was darkness. Next Van Loan and Fordyce began to work over the door of the smaller vault in the far corner. Finally it swung open. There was burning a bright light!

What was it—an incandescent witness to man or devil? "Inconceivable!" they drew back for an instant as the door swung noiselessly open. Yet no one was there. Apparently not a thing was disturbed.

Garrick was going over the interior of the vault carefully and quietly, without a word. It seemed hopeless. No one could have got out. Yet there was no one there. Van Loan stood speechless.

Garrick had come to the vault—alone, standing in the corner. He paused as if an idea had occurred to him.

"Come," he shouted, "give me a hand!" Together they moved it. It rolled surprisingly easy on its well-oiled wheels.

"Look!" cried Garrick, who was nearest.

There, in the smooth steel wall, yawned a black hole, big enough for a man's body to wriggle through.

The wall had been penetrated by a careful calculation which brought the hole just behind the safe. Then with a lever the intruder had been able to move the little safe back and forth to hide the entrance through which, night after night, he visited the treasure room.

Without a moment's hesitation Garrick plunged into the hole, fearless of man or beast, wriggling his way along and calling back from time to time as he progressed.

"It runs into the basement of the building," he panted, "and ends back of a closet in the barber shop. One of you come through after me, the other two hurry around to the barber shop."

He wriggled on through the tunnel. A moment later Kenton followed. Fordyce and Van Loan started around the other way.

All was dark in the barber shop. Not a soul was there. Both Deitz and his fair manicule had apparently long ago shut up the shop and left it. Who was it who had used it during the long silent hours of night?

Garrick switched on the lights. In a closet he disclosed two large, bolt-studded tanks, like boilers, with dials and stopcocks and tubes and valves.

He stooped and picked up a green-necked instrument, like a distorted double T, with two parallel tubes fastened together, and nozzles at the end.

"What is it?" asked Kenton, surveying it with awe.

"A cutter-burner—an oxyacetylene blowpipe, with which steel can be cut with scarcely more effort than is required to slice cheese with a knife," replied Garrick, handling the thing eagerly.

Kenton looked at Garrick aghast.

"Robbery with this gang?" he blurted out almost with awe, "must have been an art as carefully strategized as a promoter's plan or a merchant's trade campaign."

"Yes," agreed the detective. "Night after night, the thieves must have worked patiently, noiselessly with the blowpipe, cutting away the steel, removing the rock concrete. Carefully they must have calculated to come out just back of the little safe. It looks as if they must have some inside knowledge to do that and avoid the network of wires."

Suddenly Fordyce broke in on them, pale and excited.

"Garrick!" he cried. "There has been an alarm on Van Loan's door."

"What?" exclaimed the detective. "How did it happen?"

"We were coming through the hall as you directed. As we reached the door to the street I turned. For a moment I thought Van Loan was going out on the street instead of—"

"Yes—yes," interrupted Garrick, suddenly thinking of McCorkle and his probable action under the circumstances.

"Instead of coming here with me. No. There was a woman facing him—a woman and a man, at the door. She drew

At last McCorkle answered. "Mac," fairly shouted Garrick, "has any one entered the building from that car or any other?"

"No, sir."

"Then watch the door. Don't let any one out at all—no one. Understand? I am ringing up to have some one there to back you up."

"Mr. Garrick," interrupted McCorkle, "from where I am standing I can see a big black limousine which has just drawn up to the door. Three men have jumped out and are going into the building. The car is waiting."

"Then get over by the door—quick. There will be some one there to help you out if anything should happen. Only play safe—until you hear something suspicious from the inside. Then pull the gun on them—and—McCorkle—remember, in these quiet streets downtown a police whistle may be better even than a gun at night."

Garrick had scarcely finished a hurried call for reinforcements for his man out there when the door, which he had left unwatched, opened after the last shuffle of three pairs of feet down the marble corridor of the hallway.

He stepped to his feet, his hand on his gun.

"What is it—what's the matter?" cried Van Loan, who was the first to enter.

"Where are they?"

He had seen Garrick's automatic and had quickly assumed that he was holding some one at bay.

Garrick laughed, then motioned to the still tinkling bell.

"What is it?" asked Van Loan, pointing down at the bell.

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"Yes—yes," interrupted Garrick, suddenly thinking of McCorkle and his probable action under the circumstances.

"Instead of coming here with me. No. There was a woman facing him—a woman and a man, at the door. She drew

a pistol, a little ivory handled pistol, and fired squarely at him. I saw my chance. Before she could fire again, I seized her arm and wrenched it from her. Here it is."

He handed the pistol, still warm and smoking, to Garrick.

"The man was not armed, I think. But with Van Loan wounded, they were two to one against me. Hurry!"

"A woman?" asked Garrick, following quickly. "Who?"

"I think it was that Miss Gaylord—the little man in the barber shop. The man I couldn't see very well. But outside, on the street, there seemed to be another man holding them back at the door."

"McCorkle," exclaimed Garrick quickly. "That's the way it is. Always in these enterprises there is a woman."

Garrick rushed up to Van Loan, who was weak with the shock and the loss of blood from an ugly wound in his left shoulder, and bracing himself gamely against an angle of the now deserted stair stand in the corner.

"How did it happen?" he asked, tearing a strip from the shirt of the wounded man and hastily improving a tourniquet. "Here, Kenton, twist that—tight. It may stop the flow of blood while I get help."

"Oh, it's—nothing," groaned Van Loan.

Garrick, with his own automatic in one hand and the little ivory revolver in the other, advanced toward the door. It was locked, or perhaps braced, from the street. At any rate, outside he could hear McCorkle giving rapid blasts on his police whistle. Inside was a man, battering and storming at the door.

"Let me out! Let me out! This is an outrage. Let me out!"

It was Deitz, the barber. With him, now drifting into a corner, was the little man in the barber shop, Miss Gaylord.

"Come," ordered Garrick, as he covered Deitz with the automatic. "Stop that racket—hands up—about face—now march into that corner—straight ahead—when you turn your head or move a muscle I'll let you have the whole business in the back of the head. Kenton, Fordyce, some one just watch Miss Gaylord. She's snarled—but don't let her take any poison or anything like that. McCorkle!"

"Yes, sir," came an answering voice from outside. "They're coming. I hear them now around the corner."

"Good. Get the cars and the drivers. Then come in here. We're perfectly able to take care of ourselves now. By that time, the door will be unlocked."

"All right, Mr. Garrick."

Garrick turned toward the barber, who was standing sullenly, his face in the corner.

"Deafy Deitz," he said quickly. "I recognized you at once this morning in the barber shop. I thought you might have something to do with this affair, but wasn't sure but that you might have kept straight. You've been out of Joliet a year now, and when you came to New York I understood you had turned straight. But you couldn't keep straight, could you?"

The man muttered something unintelligible.

"I gave you the benefit of the doubt. But I didn't propose to let you or any one else get away with anything more without getting caught. If you hadn't been so careless, if you had been contented with what you had already, you might have been free tonight."

Van Loan, in spite of the pain, was glaring savagely at both Deitz and Miss Gaylord.